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ABSTRACT

The development and validation of a scale to assess English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) learners' perceived self-efficacy are described. Self-efficacy expectations are beliefs about one's ability to perform a given task successfully. Research on self-efficacy and related concepts is reviewed, noting their significant role in predictor human performance. Additionally, research on attitudes and ESL language and literacy learning is examined. A pilot study on development of a self-efficacy scale is summarized, and a more detailed description of efforts to establish reliability and validity of the scale, after modification, is presented. The pilot study was conducted using a 36-item scale with 45 ESL undergraduate students in the United States. The refined 30-item scale was administered to 225 intermediate-level ESL reading and writing learners at four ESL institutions in three countries. Results indicate that the ESL literacy self-efficacy scale is comprised of four factors: perceived abilities; aspiration/persistence/enjoyment; writing affect; and reading affect. The relationships found between ESL learners' literacy self-efficacy and the measure's sub-factors are discussed, and additional implications for research and teaching are considered. The final version of the questionnaire is appended. (Contains 33 references.) (MSE)

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ESL Literacy Self-Efficacy: Developing A New Scale

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Abstract

The perceived self-efficacy concept plays a significant role in predicting human performance in several areas of human effort. In the fields of English as a second language learning, self-efficacy theory has seldom been applied. However, there is a clear need for research in this area since persistence of effort related to perceived effectiveness is likely to be a major factor in learner success with language learning. This study designed a scale for ESL literacy learners to assess their self-efficacy perceptions toward learning English writing and reading. After pilot testing a draft scale, this study modified and re-tested this scale for its validity, reliability, and constituent sub-factors. The results show that the ESL self-efficacy literacy scale is comprised of four factors. The relations between ESL learners' literacy self-efficacy and the measure's sub-factors are discussed. Also, the implications of the study results are suggested.

ESL Literacy Self-Efficacy: Developing A New Scale

This paper describes the development and validation of a scale to assess ESL students' perceptions toward learning English with special emphasis on reading and writing in English. In other areas of human performance, attitudinal constructs such as perceived self-efficacy have been as effective as measured skill levels in predicting real-world performance and the combination of skill and perception have been more effective predictors than either indicator alone. The measure described below draws upon and modifies for use with ESL students previous research on self-efficacy, persistence, and affect.

1.1. Previous research on perceived self-efficacy and related constructs

The perceived self-efficacy concept plays a significant role in predicting human performance in several areas of human effort. Self-efficacy expectations are the beliefs about one's ability to perform a given task or behavior successfully. Bandura (1986) indicates that because perceived self-efficacy directly mediates the integration and application of existing skills, the influence of perceived self-efficacy on performance increases as component skills are mastered. Sherer and Maddux (1982) describe the main points of self-efficacy theory as follows: ". . . personal mastery expectations are the primary determinants of behavioral change; individual differences in past experiences and attribution of success to skill or chance result in different levels of generalized self-efficacy expectations."

Several research studies have determined that self-perception of the origins of success plays a role in human performance. Bandura (1977), investigating the treatment of various phobias, found that efficacy expectations determine people's aspiration and persistence. Feltz (1982), studying the athletic performance of college students, found that subjects' actual diving performance strongly correlates with their perceived senses of their own abilities. Lent, Brown and Larkin (1984) found high correlation between subjects' perceptions of self-efficacy and subjects' persistence and success in college science and engineering study. Chambliss and Murray (1979), investigating people's weight reduction, found that subjects' internal and external locus of control orientation influenced their further weight reduction.

1.2. Related Attitudinal Constructs

In a related area, Marjoribanks (1980) studying ethnic families and children's school persistence and achievement, found that children's attitudes toward school related strongly to their academic achievement. Schunk (1994) has examined the impact of strategy training upon children's perceptions of literacy self-efficacy using a few items directly related to paragraph writing. Yang (1993) has used locus of control and oral proficiency related items to develop profiles of language beliefs among undergraduate ESL learners in Taiwan. Thus it can be seen that, in a variety of arenas, people's perceptions toward tasks and senses of their own abilities are related to their likelihood of persisting in the face of difficulty.

1.3. Relation of attitude to ESL and literacy learning

The studies cited above document the role in human performance of a constellation of perceptions and attitudes that have tended to be described using the labels: self-efficacy, self-concept, and attitude. Some studies, such as those of Bandura, clearly delimit self-efficacy to assessments of an individual's perceptions about his or her ability and likelihood of persistence. Other studies widen the concept to include a general sense of the degree to which an individual is in control of outcomes (i.e., locus of control), while still others assess general attitudes in relation to an activity and the degree to which the activity is linked to personal aspirations.

It is likely that the concepts above are inter-related especially in connection with English as a second language (ESL) learners' attitudes toward improving literacy. Improving literacy takes a significant amount of effort and practice. ESL learners for whom literacy has been difficult in the past may be hindered by negative self-perceptions of ability, persistence, control, and even the value of literacy itself. Indeed some researchers have documented the extreme negative feelings about past literacy experiences held by many low literate adults (Bean, et al., 1989; Van Tilburg & Dubois, 1989).

In the field of ESL literacy, self-efficacy theory has seldom been applied. However, there is a clear need for research in this area. Since ESL learners have a wide experience of language learning, their self-

efficacy expectations are especially likely to be influenced by past attributions of success. It seems likely, then, that effective English as second language programs will need to address the areas of self-efficacy expectations along with areas of skill. An important beginning step is the development of a measure to assess changes in the attitudes and perceptions of language learners. Research in other areas suggests that these expectations will surely influence student learning attitudes and motivations which, in turn, will influence later success. Since, to a degree, attitudes and perceptions of self-efficacy are linked to specific subjects and tasks, a self-efficacy and attitude measure linked to ESL literacy study is needed. A well-developed self-efficacy measure for these areas can function both as a predictor of learners' learning directions and as a sign of how they have changed during the learning process.

1.4. Related Measures

Sherer and Maddux (1982) constructed and validated a generalized self-efficacy scale with expectancies in areas such as social skills or vocational competence. Three hundred and seventy six students in introductory psychology classes rated themselves on 14-point Likert scales. The scales ranged from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". Twenty-three items were divided into two sub-scales: the General Self-efficacy sub-scale, and the Social Self-efficacy sub-scale. An example item from the first sub-scale is: "When I make plans, I am certain I can make them work." For the second sub-scale, an example is: "It is difficult for me to make new friends." The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for the General Self-efficacy scale was 0.86 and for the Social Self-efficacy sub-scale 0.71. Compared with the alpha value of 0.6 recommended by Nunnally (1978) for scales to be used in basic research, these alpha reliability coefficients are fairly high for a sample size of 376.

Zimmerman, Bandura and Martinez-Pons (1992) studied self-motivation for academic attainment. Two scales were used in this study: the self-efficacy for self-regulated learning scale which included 11 items, and the self-efficacy for academic achievement scale which included nine items. One example from the self-regulated learning scale is: "How well can you study when there are other interesting things to do?" An example question from the academic achievement scale is: "How well can you learn general

mathematics?" Students rated their perceived self-efficacy on a 7-point scale. One hundred and two ninth and tenth graders participated in this study. Cronbach alpha reliability tests were conducted for each of the scales. The coefficient of reliability was 0.87 for the self-regulated learning scale and 0.70 for the academic achievement scale. For a sample size of 120, the two self-efficacy scales are moderately highly reliable.

Nowicki and Strickland (1973) presented a measure of a generalized locus of control for children. The Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control scale consisted of 40 questions based on Rotter's (1966) definition of the internal-external control of reinforcement dimension. Respondents answered either yes or no to each item. The items describe reinforcement situations across interpersonal and motivational areas such as affiliation, achievement, and dependency. One example question is: "Most of the time, do you feel that you can change what might happen tomorrow by what you do today?" The sample consisted of 1,017 mostly Caucasian elementary and high school students in four different communities. All schools were in a county bordering a large metropolitan school system. Test-re-test reliability coefficients for a six-week interval were 0.63 (for Grade 3), 0.66 (for Grade 7) and 0.71 (for Grade 10). For a large sample of 1017, the reliability values are moderately high.

Marjoribanks (1980) adopted Barker Lunn's (1970) Children's School Attitude Schedule to test the relationship between children's school attitudes and their achievements in different family environments. For instance, one of the item statements is: "School is boring." Another example item is: "I would like to be very good at schoolwork." The responses to each statement were made on a five-point scale ranging from strong agreement to strong disagreement. The questionnaire contained two factors: 28 items for an affective component, and 19 items for a cognitive-behavioral component. The theta reliability for the affective component was 0.80 and for the cognitive-behavioral component 0.76. Both have moderately high reliabilities.

2. Method

The purpose of this study was to develop and validate a useful self-efficacy scale in the area of ESL teaching. Discussion of the scale development proceeds through two stages. First, there is a brief summary of a previous pilot study (Mikulecky, Lloyd & Huang, 1996) which traces the roots of the current scale and provides a data-based rationale for modifications. This is followed by a more detailed description of efforts to establish the reliability and validity of the modified scale (and sub-factors).

2.1. Pilot study

Drawing upon items modified from measures cited above and some items developed by the authors, a 36 item scale was developed to reflect several attitudinal concepts related to ESL learning. Among these attitudinal concepts were perceived abilities (efficacy), persistence, locus of control, goals and aspirations, enjoyment, and negative affect for reading and writing. The 36-item scale was administered to 45 ESL undergraduate students at a major university in the United States.

Student performances on individual items were correlated to both total scale performance and to the sub-area (e.g. enjoyment, persistence, etc.) each item was designed to represent. In addition, instructors who administered the measure were interviewed to determine if any items were confusing to students. A detailed description of this process and results is available in Mikulecky, Lloyd & Huang, 1996. In brief, the results of item analyses led the researchers to drop six items. These items were mainly in the locus of control area and did not correlate well with each other or with the scale as a whole. In addition, three items were reworded for clarity and format modifications were made to develop consistency in how students were to respond to items.

2.2. Participants in Current Study

Two hundred and twenty-five intermediate-level ESL reading and writing learners from four English learning institutions located in California, New York, Finland, and Taiwan participated in this validation study. Instructors at these institutions volunteered to administer the scale to their students after attending a professional presentation on pilot study results of the scale.

2.3. Procedures

In addition to meeting at the 1997 AAAL conference with instructors from participating institutions, the lead researchers communicated and answered questions via email and fax. As a result of these communications, guidelines for administering the scale were developed. These guidelines and the modified scale were mailed to participating instructors during the fall of 1997.

The instructors followed test administration guidelines to administer the ESL Literacy Self-Efficacy Scale to their students. Scale administration lasted about 20 to 30 minutes. After the administration, the instructor/administrators wrote down detailed comments and observations about the perceived suitability of the scale for their students. The completed answer sheets were then mailed back to the researchers for the analysis for the reliability, validity and constituent sub-factors.

One randomly selected sub-group of twelve students was re-administered the scale a few days after the original administration in order to establish the test-retest reliability of the scale. Furthermore, another randomly selected sub-group of 19 students was administered the completed scale for its Cronbach alpha value.

2.4. Measure

The refined scale consists of 30 items which students rate on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from agree a lot (5) to disagree a lot (1). Samples of scale questions are: "I enjoy learning.", "I am not very good

at learning how to write.", "I am able to keep reading even when there are other interesting things to do.", "One of my main goals is to be much better at writing by next year."

Responses are made on a separate response sheet. About half the items are worded in a negative fashion to avoid the possibility of students developing a response set for agreeing or disagreeing with all items. Coding on negatively worded items is reversed for purposes of analysis.

2.5. Data analysis

Reliability of the scale was established in two ways. Internal consistency of items was determined by computing a Cronbach internal consistency coefficient. Since the scale is also designed to serve as a pre/post measure of perceptional gains, test/retest reliability was also computed by correlating the scores of students who responded to the measure with little intervening time to influence attitudes.

The pilot study efforts to solicit feedback from instructors and to model items on existing perceptional measures addressed considerations of face validity. Further factor analysis of learner responses to the thirty items was made to determine the validity and degree to which sub-factors within the total scale actually existed.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Instructor comments

Nearly all instructors found the scale to be clear and comprehensible to their ESL intermediate level learners. A few wording changes were suggested to strengthen the clarity of items. The items pointed out by instructors include: item three (I am not very good at learning writing skills), item six (I have no problem learning reading skills), item seven (My problem is that I cannot get down to reading and writing when I should), item 13 (I find a lot of writing assignments hard to do), item 22 (It is difficult for me to concentrate on my learning task), and item 23 (I am useless at schoolwork).

After examining the items, the researchers agreed with most of the instructor observations and made the following slight wording revisions. Item 3 is rephrased to "I am not very good at learning how to

write."; item 6 to "I have no problem learning how to read." Item seven is rephrased to "My problem is that I cannot make myself read and write when I should."; item 13 to " I find a lot of writing assignments difficult."; item 22 to "It is difficult for me to concentrate when I read and write.", and item 23 to "I am not good at schoolwork."

3.2. Reliability

The Cronbach internal consistency reliability coefficient on the 225 participants is 0.8235, which is high in terms of the scale's "reliability for generalizing to other test items (Salvia & Ysseldyke, 1998, p. 139)". The test-retest reliability coefficient for 12 randomly selected participants is 0.9285 over the interval of two days. This is quite high and indicates the stability of the items. The measure can be used as a pre/post measure without concern that student response will be overly sensitive to extraneous influences.

3.3. Factor analysis of ESL literacy self-efficacy

In order to determine the factorial structure of learners' perceptions toward English language and literacy reflected on this scale, the researchers analyzed the data by using the factor analytic method. The researchers applied SPSS for Window Principal Axis Factoring extraction, followed with Kaiser Normalization rotation. The pattern matrix, sorted by factor, appears in Table 1.

Table 1
Factor Analysis Summary of Self-Efficacy Items

	Factor			
	1	2	3	4
11. I think that I am pretty good at reading.	.809	--	--	--
06. I have no problem learning reading skills.	.645	--	--	--
18. I think that I am pretty good at my writing work.	.644	--	--	--
25. I learn new words easily.	.595	--	--	--
15. I remember the important points in readings very well.	.589	--	--	--
01. I do a good job of participating in class discussion.	.475	--	--	--
19. I can motivate myself to read.	.413	--	--	--

30. Sometimes I think that I am no good at reading.	.399	--	--	--
04. I am able to keep reading even when there are other interesting things to do.	.369	--	--	--
29. I can study well when there are other interesting things to do.	.230	--	--	--
05. One of my main goals is to be much better at writing by next year.	--	.683	--	--
17. One of my main goals is to be much better at reading by next year.	--	.678	--	--
09. When I decide to write something, I go ahead and do it.	--	.672	--	--
24. I enjoy writing.	--	.547	--	--
14. When I decide to read something, I go ahead and do it.	--	.491	--	--
02. I enjoy learning.	--	.414	--	--
26. If I can't understand a reading the first time, I keep trying until I can.	--	.300	--	--
20. My writing work worries me.	--	--	.614	--
16. I feel insecure about my ability to write clearly.	--	--	.498	--
07. My problem is that I cannot get down to reading and writing when I should.	--	--	.461	--
08. Sometimes I think that I am no good at writing.	--	--	.451	--
13. I find a lot of writing assignments hard to do.	--	--	.319	--
03. I am not very good at learning writing skills.	--	--	.298	--
23. I am useless at schoolwork.	--	--	--	.565
22. It is difficult for me to concentrate on my learning task.	--	--	--	.530
27. My reading assignments worry me.	--	--	--	.484
28. Reading is boring.	--	--	--	.475
12. I avoid trying to read new articles when they look too difficult for me.	--	--	--	.474
21. I find a lot of readings hard to understand.	--	--	--	.421
10. Doing well in learning is not one of my main goals in life.	--	--	--	.212

The internal consistency coefficients for each factor are shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Summary of Internal Consistency Coefficient of Each Factor

Factor	1	2	3	4
Internal consistency coefficient	.7866	.8017	.6416	6592

The initial SPSS factor analysis (Table 1) indicates four factors are present for this scale. A review of items attributed to each factor reveals patterns of common traits.

Factor 1 has high loadings on items (1, 4, 6, 11, 15, 18, 19, 25, 29, 30) associated with how effective learners perceive to be their abilities. They mainly reflect learners' perceived abilities in ESL literacy learning. This factor is similar to Bandura's theory, in which self-efficacy "...pertains to individuals' personal judgments of their performance capabilities for a particular type of task at a particular point in time and is closely linked to expectations for success (Stipek, 1998, p. 41)". Therefore this factor is labeled Perceived Abilities.

Factor 2 loads heavily on items (2, 5, 9, 14, 17, 24, 26) mainly reflecting learners' aspirations, persistence and enjoyment in ESL and literacy learning. These items related with how able learners are at persisting to learn English. Associated with this sense of self-efficacy are perceptions of enjoyment and self-improvement aspiration related to English literacy. This factor contains elements similar to Bandura's (1997) findings, which revealed the relation between efficacy expectations and aspiration as well as persistence, and Lent et al.s' study (1984), which found the correlation between self-efficacy and persistence. Although previous research did not greatly address the relation between self-efficacy and enjoyment, according to White (1959) and Piaget (1952), "the feeling of efficacy (mastery or competence) is evident ... when they [children] achieve some goal ... It is this positive emotional experience that makes mastery behavior self-reinforcing (Stipek, 1998, p. 119)". The positive emotional experience, the enjoyment, learners possess for the ESL literacy task may contribute to their positive self-efficacy perception. The reasons for the cluster of the three elements, persistence, aspiration, and enjoyment, in one factor are not apparent, however. Therefore, this factor is labeled Aspiration, Persistence, Enjoyment in order to show the individual traits of the elements in this factor.

Factor 3 loads on items (3, 7, 8, 13, 16 and 20) relate mainly to learners' writing affect. Therefore, it is termed Writing Affect.

Factor 4 loads on items (10, 12, 21, 22, 23, 27, 28) mainly related to learners' reading affect. Although this factor loads on items 22 and 23, which do not appear to contain the word, "reading", they are strongly related to schoolwork and learning task which are likely to include reading. Thus, the factor is labeled Reading Affect.

The final two factors, though being negative, need to be contended with. Negative feelings related to reading and writing in English play strong and separable roles in attitude formation. This may even be the case for students who perceive their abilities to be strong.

3.4. Final modification

Item 10 (i.e. Doing well in learning is not one of my main goals in life) in factor four does not demonstrate a clear judgment on reading. The numerical result also shows it clusters much less tightly to the cluster than other items (the correlation coefficient difference being more than 0.2 from the closest item) in this factor. In addition, the internal consistency coefficient of factor four further increases to 0.7352 after dropping item 10. Therefore, the researchers decided to eliminate item 10 from this scale.

The Cronbach internal consistency reliability coefficient of the modified scale on the 225 participants is 0.8268, which is slightly higher than the reliability coefficient before eliminating item 10. The completed scale was also tested on 19 English literacy intermediate-level students in Taiwan and obtained an Cronbach alpha value of 0.8554. The test-retest reliability coefficient for 12 randomly selected participants remains 0.9285 over the interval of two days. This scale was further translated into Chinese version. The Cronbach alpha value of the Chinese version on 47 English literacy intermediate-level students is 0.9336.

The revised factors and items are: factor one, Perceived Abilities (items 1, 4, 6, 11, 15, 18, 19, 25, 29, and 30); factor two, Aspiration, Persistence, Enjoyment (items 2, 5, 9, 14, 17, 24, and 26); factor three, Writing Affect (items 3, 7, 8, 13, 16 and 20); and factor four, Reading Affect (items 12, 21, 22, 23, 27, and

28). The revised internal consistency coefficients are listed in Table 3. The full scale (revised after the current study), answer sheet, and scoring sheet can be found in Appendix A.

Table 3

Summary of Final Internal Consistency Coefficient and Name of Each Factor

Factor	Final internal consistency coefficient
1. Perceived Abilities	0.7866
2. Aspiration, Persistence, Enjoyment	0.8017
3. Writing Affect	0.6416
4. Reading Affect	0.7077

3.5. Results of learners' responses

Student mean scores for each factor produce a profile for this populations' perceptions and attitudes toward ESL literacy. For purposes of analysis, scores on negatively worded items were reversed and recoded (see item 3, 7, 8, 12, 13, 16, 20, 21, 22, 23, 27, 28, and 30). The recoding still produces an accurate indicator of the presence of each of the four factors.

In this study, the mean from the full scale is 3.38 (standard deviation 0.45), which shows the respondents generally have more than median self-efficacy. A score of 3 means "not sure" and 4 means "agree a little." Factor one (Perceived abilities) has the mean value of 3.35 (standard deviation 0.64), which indicates the respondents tend to have slightly positive perceptions of their abilities in ESL literacy task. The mean score for factor two (Aspirations, persistence, enjoyment) was 3.99 (standard deviation 0.68), which shows the respondents have even higher perceptions in their aspiration, persistence and enjoyment than in abilities. The mean value of 2.86 (standard deviation 0.57) in factor three (Writing affect) demonstrates that respondents' writing affect tends to be slightly lower than median value. This reveals the respondents' perceptions of writing tasks per se are slightly negative. Factor four (Reading

affect) reveals a mean score of 3.25 (standard deviation 0.75), which indicates the respondents' perceptions of reading tasks are slightly positive.

Mean scores are not sufficient to provide teachers with a sense of how a class is performing. In addition to mean scores for the total group, Table 4 presents mean scores for students in the bottom quarter (percentile 25), top quarter (percentile 75) as well as bottom and top 5% of students. The 225 participants' responses on the scale indicate that for factors 2 and 4, the top students are scoring nearly as high as possible-- especially in the area of aspirations, persistence and enjoyment. For this aspiration area, 3/4 of students still score above the mid-point of 3.0 and even the bottom 5% of students still scores near the mid-point (2.66). Top scoring students do not score as high in terms of perceived abilities and affect toward writing, however. In these two factor areas (i.e. perceived abilities & writing affect), low scoring students fall below the mid-point with the bottom 5% being quite negative about writing.

Table 4

Participants' Responses on the Scale

	Mean	Std Deviation	Range	Percentile 25	Percentile 75	Percentile 05	Percentile 95
Perceived Ability	3.35	.64	3.20	2.90	3.80	2.30	4.40
Asp., pers, enjoy	3.99	.68	4.00	3.57	4.57	2.76	5.00
Writing Affect	2.86	.57	2.83	2.50	3.16	2.00	3.95
Reading Affect	3.25	.75	4.00	2.66	3.66	1.88	4.66
Full Scale	3.38	.45	2.69	3.07	3.67	2.71	4.22

Although the responses of 225 participants is not sufficient to constitute a norming group, it may at least serve as a beginning reference for other teachers who use this scale..

4. Conclusions

The results of this study reveal four constitutional factors contributing to ESL learners' literacy attitudes and perceptions of self-efficacy: 1) perceived abilities, 2) perceived aspiration, persistence, and enjoyment, 3) perceived writing affect, and 4) perceived reading affect. At least two implications for ESL educators are suggested by the existence of these separate factors. Though attitudes toward ESL literacy are related, students can have particular strengths and weaknesses. In fact, for the 225 students who participated in this study, aspirations and feelings about reading tended to be relative strengths (which can be built upon) while senses of their own abilities and feelings about writing tended to be relative weaknesses (which may call for special instructional attention). Further, the range of scores is broad enough that it is worth while for teachers to also consider some differentiated classroom activities and assignments which address the strengths and weakness of individual students and sub-groups within a class.

Previous research on the importance of self-perception of effectiveness indicates that it is important for learners to develop accurate and positive perceptions toward their capabilities. This implies that they receive regular feedback about their growing strengths and abilities. Many students are only aware of the degree to which they have failed and thereby develop negative affect in relation to their learning tasks. The fact that student affect toward writing is lower than toward reading may be related to the differential way in which feedback is provided for these two activities.

In terms of making language learning a life-long goal and activity, it is important to develop concurrently language skill and positive language perceptions. A student with moderate skill, but a low sense of his or her own abilities and even lower affect about the language is unlikely to seek the language opportunities necessary for maintaining and increasing language ability. In fact, ability gained at the expense of positive perceptions may very likely be lost once a student leaves a course, stops using the language, and sees ability degenerate.

There are several ways a teacher might use to improve language perceptions as well as ability. In terms of developing accurate and positive perceptions of effectiveness, teachers might consider offering at least as much feedback on what has been mastered as they currently do on what failings remain to be

addressed. Students, in turn, can keep records of vocabulary mastered, situations in which they have been able to successfully communicate, and types of material which they have been able to successfully read. Another way to help learners begin to monitor their own growth is to spend some time in helping them set reasonable learning goals and to provide them with study, motivation, and self-monitoring strategies. This sort of anchoring in accurate and positive self-assessments of ability engenders the confidence to attempt language learning when away from an instructor and to continue it beyond formal study.

Moreover, although language learning cannot always be enjoyable, learners' perception of enjoyment, aspiration, and persistence need to be enhanced by the degree to which instructors can help create enjoyable learning experiences which can lead learners to set higher aspirations for themselves. The use of the target language to accomplish real tasks (i.e. communicating with others, planning trips or gathering materials, participating in another culture) are ways instructors help develop these positive feelings and aspiration. When one considers life-long learning, skill and perceptions may be equally important. Such activities as those mentioned above become much more than "extra" enrichment activities. Indeed, since many language learners drop their study and use of a language once outside of class, such activities may be arguably more important than skill activities.

In the field of ESL, the topic of perceived self-efficacy has been rarely investigated. Its study is particularly important for language learning because second language learning is so demanding and time consuming. Overly heavy emphasis on difficult to acquire language skill (to the detriment of positive perceptions) has often created tragic situations in which the very teachers who are working so hard to teach language are the ones who guarantee that many of their students will never continue with it once they have left class. On the other hand, when students can learn to see and enjoy their own growing abilities, they are much more likely to set personal goals of continued learning (Zimmerman, 1995). Dornyei (1994) reviewed motivation in the foreign language classroom and determined that "once a strong sense of efficacy is developed, a failure may not have much impact (p. 277).". Oxford and Sherin (1994) also pointed out that many SL students lack self-efficacy and "feel lost in the language class (p. 21)". This ESL literacy self-efficacy scale may serve as a tool for teachers to monitor the general growth of their classes and to identify groups of students who may call for some special attention. Perhaps, most importantly, the

simple act of teachers paying attention to changes in students' perceptions may go a long way toward having teachers provide accurate, positive feedback and create learning situations which focus upon positive perceptions as well as skill.

The development of this ESL literacy self-efficacy scale has gone through two stages: the pilot study and the current study. Modifications have produced a convenient, usable scale which has acceptable levels of validity and reliability. Moreover, the scale is comprised of four stable sub-factors which can be of use to instructors and program evaluators for identifying areas of perceptional strength and weakness and for focusing instruction upon relevant areas. Teachers can now use this scale to profile the ESL literacy perceptions of individuals and entire classes. The scale can also be used as part of a broad program evaluation.

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Appendix A

ESL Literacy Self-Efficacy Questionnaire

** This questionnaire is asking about your English reading and writing learning. Please read the sentence in each item carefully, decide how much you agree with the sentence, and circle one number on the answer sheet next to that item number.

For example:

On item 24 "I enjoy writing.", if you feel you enjoy writing very much, then,

on item 24 of the answer sheet, you should circle "5" as:

24. 1___2___3___4___(5)

if you enjoy writing, but not very much, you should circle 4 as:

24. 1___2___3___(4)___5

if you are not sure if you enjoy writing, you should circle 3 as:

24. 1___2___(3)___4___5

if you don't enjoy writing, you should circle 2 as:

24. 1___(2)___3___4___5

if you really don't enjoy writing, you should circle 1 as:

24. (1)___2___3___4___5

Now, start this questionnaire: circle a number on the answer sheet for each question.

1. I do a good job of participating in class discussion.
2. I enjoy learning.
3. I am not very good at learning how to write.
4. I am able to keep reading even when there are other interesting things to do.
5. One of my main goals is to be much better at writing by next year.
6. I have no problem learning how to read.
7. My problem is that I cannot make myself read and write when I should.

8. Sometimes I think that I am no good at writing.

9. When I decide to write something, I go ahead and do it.

10. I think that I am pretty good at reading.

11. I avoid trying to read new articles when they look too difficult for me.

12. I find a lot of writing assignments difficult.

13. When I decide to read something, I go ahead and do it.

14. I remember the important points in readings very well.

15. I feel insecure about my ability to write clearly.

16. One of my main goals is to be much better at reading by next year.

17. I think that I am pretty good at my writing work.

18. I can motivate myself to read.

19. My writing work worries me.

20. I find a lot of readings hard to understand.

21. It is difficult for me to concentrate when I read and write.

22. I am not good at schoolwork.

23. I enjoy writing.

24. I learn new words easily.

25. If I can't understand a reading the first time, I keep trying until I can.

26. My reading assignments worry me.

27. Reading is boring.

28. I can study well when there are other interesting things to do.

29. Sometimes I think that I am no good at reading.

Name of this class:_____

What country are you from? _____

Age: _____ Gender: _____

What is your first language? _____

Answer Sheet

|_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|

1	2	3	4	5
disagree a lot	disagree a little	not sure	agree a little	agree a lot

Circle the number which shows your opinion the best according to the above scale. **(* check that you are answering the right item.)**

1.	1 2 3 4 5	16.	1 2 3 4 5
2.	1 2 3 4 5	17.	1 2 3 4 5
3.	1 2 3 4 5	18.	1 2 3 4 5
4.	1 2 3 4 5	19.	1 2 3 4 5
5.	1 2 3 4 5	20.	1 2 3 4 5
6.	1 2 3 4 5	21.	1 2 3 4 5
7.	1 2 3 4 5	22.	1 2 3 4 5
8.	1 2 3 4 5	23.	1 2 3 4 5
9.	1 2 3 4 5	24.	1 2 3 4 5
10.	1 2 3 4 5	25.	1 2 3 4 5
11.	1 2 3 4 5	26.	1 2 3 4 5
12.	1 2 3 4 5	27.	1 2 3 4 5
13.	1 2 3 4 5	28.	1 2 3 4 5
14.	1 2 3 4 5	29.	1 2 3 4 5
15.	1 2 3 4 5		

Worksheet for Scoring

Name_____

Perceived Abilities	Asp. Pers. Enjo.	Writing Affect	Reading Affect
01._____	02._____	03._____ (recode)	11._____(recode)
04._____	05._____	07._____ (recode)	20._____(recode)
06._____	09._____	08._____ (recode)	21._____(recode)
10._____	13._____	12._____ (recode)	22. _____(recode)
14._____	16._____	15._____ (recode)	26. _____(recode)
17._____	23._____	19._____ (recode)	27. _____(recode)
18._____	25._____		
24._____			
28._____			
29._____ (recode)			

SUM_____ + SUM_____ + SUM_____ + SUM_____ = Total_____